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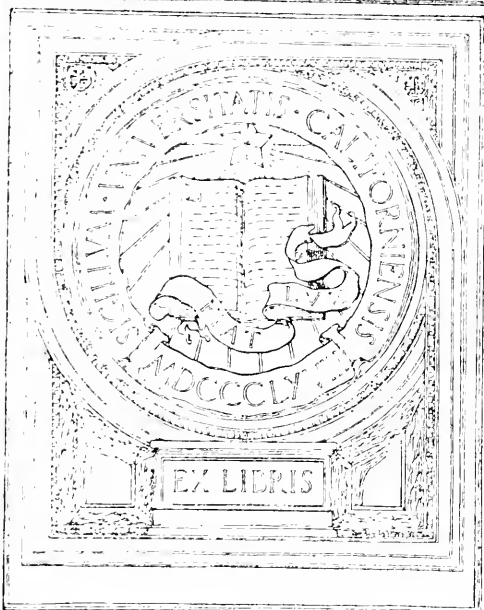
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Arma Virumque

By

Robert Withington

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# ARMA VIRUMQUE

BY

ROBERT WITHINGTON

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To Fernand Baldensperger  
with memories of a long  
friendship.  
Robert Withington.

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# ARMA VIRUMQUE

BY

ROBERT WITHINGTON

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1917

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TO MY BROTHER  
LIEUTENANT  
PAUL RICHMOND WITHINGTON

M. D.: U. S. M. O. R. C.

I DEDICATE  
THESE PAGES

HATING WAR  
BUT HEARING THE VOICE OF DUTY  
HE VOLUNTEERED WHEN HIS COUNTRY CALLED  
AND LEFT HIS HOSPITAL WORK IN BOSTON  
TO SERVE ON THE FIELDS OF FRANCE

1917



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## ARMA VIRUMQUE

“ARMS and the man”—the World War and Wilhelm—have inspired much of this verse. He who bears the responsibility for the war—and surely the Kaiser knew of the Austrian Note, and could foresee its consequences!—has stricken a century with agony of body and mind; but he has revealed new glories of soul. He has united the rest of the world, and has taught us many a needed lesson—for the mould of materialism was upon us, and the dust of ease was settling on our ideals.

We are roused to find ourselves in a Golden Age. We have discovered the heroic Albert, the devoted Hoover, the eloquent and determined Wilson; we have seen the courageous Kitchener, the persistent Haig, the magnificent Joffre. The resourcefulness of Japan, the honor of England, the endurance of Belgium, the nobility of France, the bravery of Italy, the patience of the United States, and the faith of the world, are in the scales against German arrogance. Russia has cast off the chains of Autocracy; ancient China and the republics of South America defy the Teutonic over-lord. Ruin and suffering hath he sown—and he shall reap the whirlwind.

*Punica fides—deutsche Treue!* Autocracy's mask has fallen from her face. And the Allies, who may well say with the Fathers of Massachusetts, “*Ense petimus placidam sub libertate quietem*”—who seek with a sword quiet peace under liberty,—may rest assured of final victory, though temporary reverses increase their burden for the moment. They are thrice armed, for their quarrel is just.

## SWITZERLAND

*"Die Existenz der Schweiz hängt auf dem Spiel."*

—H. S., 4 August 1914

BRAVE little country with undaunted soul—  
A phare of freedom in a sea of strife!  
Against thy borders, hungry for thy life,  
The waves of war with threat'ning thunders roll.  
In this grim nightmare of a world attaint,  
Thy various peoples hold one common aim,  
And, watching with clear eyes the deadly game,  
Shoulder a heavy loss without complaint.  
Massed on thy marches, ready to defend  
Each lake and meadow, each majestic peak,  
Thy sons stand firm, and in just accents speak  
To all thy neighbors, neither foe nor friend.

With Belgium's agony before her bloodshot eyes,  
Let that mad nation pause, who seeks another prize!

## THE SEVENTH OF MAY

1916

A GASP of horror from a war-wrung world,  
Drenched in the blood of heroes, told the tale:  
We still could feel! and when that shot was hurled—  
A grim defiance—men grew yet more pale.  
Shout triumph, O ye Germans! Was your boast  
That ye attack unwarned an unarmed foe?  
Women and children off the Irish coast,  
Seeing Death come, have had good cause to know!

No act of God was this! Let Wilhelm smile,  
Who sent a thousand to their sudden doom.  
They have found peace beside fair Erin's isle,  
The restless seas surge white above their tomb—  
But we, who heard the screaming of the drowned,  
We still do nothing as the months roll round...

## ALBERT VIR

*"In olden days, to call a man 'kingly' was to compliment:  
now the order is reversed."*—Dudley C. Jones.

ALBERT! the world shall ne'er forget thy voice  
Firmly maintaining, in calm tones, the Right;  
Like Luther fearless, thou didst make thy choice,  
And Honor spoke...

The cruel German Might  
Heard, comprehending not; and in its spite  
It loosed on Belgian homes the hounds of war...

Never has morning failed to follow night,  
Though never night so dark was seen before.

Thy name—"illustrious" and "nobly bright"—  
Reveals new glories in God's handicraft!  
As David faced Goliath wouldst thou fight,  
Of the unequal battle in the van...  
Defiant stood the Teuton, and he laughed—  
Here was a King who also was a Man!



## CARDINAL MERCIER

### The Holy Patriot of Malines

ENTHRONED within thy prison, courage high,  
Thou darest threaten when thy pleas are vain;  
Thy dauntless phrases make the issues plain,  
And men unborn shall hear thy people's cry  
Voiced with the force of Christian majesty;  
O noble pastor of a martyred flock!  
Thy ringing words shall teach them not to mock  
The conquered, who have taught us how to die!

Behind a rampart of live steel, which Might  
Hath built about thy countrymen, the foe  
Fastens a bleeding nation to the Cross!  
Bold preacher of the Triumph of the Right,  
Thou wilt not leave thy Belgium in her woe—  
Scathless her Honor, scant she counts her loss!

## MALINES CATHEDRAL

1916

MASSIVE and proud, thy tower from afar  
Points upward, silent, standing tall and brown  
Against the western sky; thy ruined town  
Clings lovingly about thee; many a scar  
In thy old sides (*yet has foe failed to mar*  
*Thine ancient beauty still serene!*) the crown  
Of martyrdom bestows. If He look down,  
Our Lord can see what Prussians truly are!

Emblem of Belgium! riddled by the shells  
Which desecrating enemies have hurled  
With potent rage... The bricks wherewith thy wounds  
Are bandaged, tell a tale to all the world  
Of courage in the face of Hunnish hounds,  
And faith triumphant o'er a thousand hells!

## ON SEEING A NEW CARTOON

BY RAEMAEKERS

FEARLESS portrayer of Kultur! Thy pen  
Has opened, with its trenchant lines, the eyes  
Of all the world to Belgium's miseries  
And Teuton frightfulness! The hearts of men  
Quiver before thy pictured horrors—then  
Thou thrustest deeper—

Terror-laden cries  
Swell from thy pages... Martyred ghosts arise,  
Women and children writhe and wail again...

With satire sharper than the Kaiser's sword,  
Thou dar'st attack him, scoffing at the price  
Wilhelm hath set upon thy head; he hears—  
(Thy gift becoming poison in his ears)—  
The sobs of feeble victims, which suffice  
To make his minions glorify their Lord...

## BELGIS

HAIL Belgians! —Knowing that ye must succumb,  
(*Ecce Germani!*) banners ye unfold:  
Red: for a courage of no common mould;  
Black: for the anguish Time has failed to numb,  
Each stab still open... God shall overcome  
Relentless cruelty; then, all in gold,  
The brilliant future (*these are not the old  
Colors we knew!*) shall end your martyrdom!

Heroic kingdom and immortal King!  
Our land has much to learn from you; our pride,  
O brave Ally! is not unmixed with pain...  
Victim of Wilhelm, take what aid we bring!—  
Ere we were roused, one hurried to your side,  
Regardless of reward, his duty plain...

*Since August 1914, the colors of Belgium have taken on a new meaning—they have been consecrated by suffering bravely borne. Now that we have joined ourselves with the Allies—no longer self-indulgent and too proud to fight—we realize, with a pang of envy, that we can learn a lesson from the little kingdom, which, having no*

*hope of victory, resisted the crushing force which swept across her borders, because she knew that Honor was worth more than Property—that he who would save his life must lose it. We have made a loan (why was it not a gift?) to the Belgian Government; but before that, for twenty-nine months, one of our fellow-citizens (whose name is hidden in the acrostic) devoted himself to the relief of Belgium, sacrificing his private interests to civilization and humanity with an idealism which has earned the gratitude of a martyred nation, and has added new lustre to the country of his birth.*

## OUR DEBT

THERE WAS a time, before the Kaiser raised  
The mask which hid the War-Lord's face from men ;  
Before the were-wolf from his murky den  
Pounced on a Europe unprepared, amazed ;  
Before, with insolence too-plainly phrased,  
He circumscribed our freedom with his pen,  
Thinking us fools, too proud to fight him—when  
He led a people blood-and-iron-crazed...

And in that time we stood apart, too long  
Wrapped in our own affairs, giving no thought  
To lands beyond the sea.—

That time has passed !  
We hear Democracy's appeal at last.

Wilhelm, we owe thee much ; for thou hast taught  
America to suffer and be strong !

## ECHOES FROM FRANCE

THE colors flew gaily—

The troops marched ~~gaily~~—

*gaily*

I saw him depart—and my soul did not boast!

On the road to Glory his sure step rang—

Rang— (Rang!

*Ah, le premier rang!)*

He's in France at his post!

His firm hand grasped me—

His arms they clasped me—

Eagerly earnest—'twas there he stood!—

I can hear him yet—the hot words he sang—

Sang—? (Sang...

*Ah, ce sacré sang!)*

Now smothered in blood...

## L'ENTENTE CORDIALE

HE: 'Tis strange—I never thought of it before!—  
But, without *u*, *l'amour* becomes *la mort*...

SHE: It's kind of you to say that, I am sure;  
Still, you must see... *I* am not in *amour*!

HE: Then in *aimer*...

SHE: And if I go from there?

HE: The sweet of love will quickly turn *amer*!

SHE: And in that sourness I find you still?

HE: You'll find that I am ever of your will!

SHE: Would I were certain—

HE: Really, can't you see—?

Oh, you and I together—

SHE: (*smiling*): That makes *O U I*!



## ON FAME

WHY DOST thou want thy deeds forever breathed  
By lips soon closed and stuffed with wormy mould?  
By myriad dwarfs who toil for paltry gold  
Why dost thou seek to have thy brow enwreathed?  
Why wouldst thou read the letters of thy name  
Strewn broadcast through the land on a printed page?  
When thou art gone, and thine to another age  
Has given way, what wilt thou care for Fame?

If thou canst help a comrade on the road  
We all must walk—of slow-descending pave;  
If thou canst lighten, for a while, his load—  
Make him forget the ever-nearing grave,  
Thou hast done all the proudest man may claim...  
What matters it if no one knows thy name?

## “E PLURIBUS UNUM”

AMERICA! with flag unfurled,  
Thou standest proud beside thy peers,  
Bound with thy sister-nations of the world,  
Throughout the years.

Led on by Courage and high Hope,  
Our fathers crossed the unknown seas,  
And strove with Nature in the wilderness,  
Forgetting ease...

And *Liberty* by Concord's stream,  
*Equality* in Charleston's fort,  
Were born again. The Union stands supreme,  
With power fraught.

A whole made up of many parts;  
One goal approached through many creeds:  
*The Universal Brotherhood of hearts,*  
For which Christ pleads.

One Nation made of many States;  
One land where many races throng,  
Who, sweeping through our ever-open gates,  
Swell Freedom's song.

Our aims are high, our faith is sure;  
And though we fail—as mortals must—  
We face what is to come, and feel secure:

*“In God we trust!”*

America! With flag unfurled,  
Thou standest proud beside thy peers;  
Bound by a common aim with all the world,  
Throughout the years!

.

## THE MIRACLES OF WILHELM

HERR WILHELM, junior partner of the firm  
Of Gott & Allah, Ltd., (who deal  
In miracles and other knick-knacks)—Germ-  
An quite in sympathy, at home in Kiel,—

*(Mention of England's Navy makes him squirm,  
Although his foes pretend he cannot feel!)*

Willy, I say, had not been unaware  
That holders of the stock of Gott et Al.  
Were growing restless: and it irked him *sehr*;  
So he determined—needing capital—  
To show what he and his attractive heir  
Had done to date in exploits magical.

Exploits exploiting no one but his friends:  
For Cousin Nick has gone, to be replaced  
By ultra-Democrats; and Tino lends  
The Greeks his absence, with an undue haste;

*(Does Willy fail to see what yet impends?  
The jewels of Autocracy are paste!)*

He has transformed to nations under arms  
All the most peaceful countries of the earth;  
The U-boat menace, and the Zepp alarms  
Serve but to rouse new courage, giving birth  
To keen appreciation of the charms  
Of one who finds such gentle cause for mirth...

The flags of Russia and her foe, Japan,  
His wizardry entwined in friendship's bond;  
Brazil and China (*this he did not plan!*)—  
Great Britain and her child across the pond—  
Forgetting old disputes (*one sometimes can!*)—  
Are now united by his magic wand.

The soul of France—the real France—stands revealed,  
Denouncing Will in no uncertain voice;  
America has wakened, and has sealed  
A compact with Democracy.

*Rejoice*

*That Selfishness and Ease in vain appealed  
With German accent. Honor gave no choice!*

The Bolsheviki—hypnotized (or bribed)—  
Followed the magic crystal with their eyes;  
And gaily (like a crowd which has imbibed  
Or wine or power suddenly) with cries  
For universal peace his will subscribed—  
Then Russia stirred, and Wilhelm lost his prize!

He has ranged all the world (or all that counts)  
Against a German foe; but one more trick  
He still must do; he bade his subjects pounce  
On Europe unprepared—now rhetoric  
Must keep their oozing spirits up; (*an ounce  
Of sense—if spilled therein—would make them sick!*)

He and his vassals must (if they would live)  
Constantly argue, threaten, urge, exhort and bawl...

*If e'er the time should come, when, fugitive,  
His steps no longer ring in castle hall,  
Could he then bring his people to forgive—  
'Twould be the greatest miracle of all!*

## LES CHAMPS DE DIEU

*Red poppies nod beneath the sway  
Of gentle breezes in the grass,  
A blaze of color—then the day  
When reapers pass...  
And scattered with the new-mown hay  
Pale, faded, blossoms meet decay,  
No longer bending in bright array  
'Neath southern winds i' the grass...*

---

Grave Duty speaks: the country's call  
Startles her youth from desk and farm;  
Ready at once to give its all,  
Heedless of harm...  
In lines of khaki, straight and tall,  
Toward battlefields where some must fall,  
They march, a Kaiser to inthrall,  
The Future to disarm.

*Flowers must fade, and men must die;  
Nature is pitiless—and sure!  
The scythe of Time none can defy,  
Nor long endure...  
But you, the "flower of our land,"—  
(In peace beside us, at our hand  
Unnoticed and obscure)—  
Crossing the seas, a new Ally  
'Gainst him who set the world awry,  
Join others, whose stern purpose high  
Has made their fame secure!*

Ye will that nothing shall destroy  
The source of friendship: war must cease!  
And unborn children shall enjoy

Freedom's increase.

A woven Past of blood and tears  
Clothed our calm Yesterday; now fears  
And blood will weave for coming years

A world of lasting peace!

*Some march no longer in bright array.....!*

*Pale faces, eyes of staring glass,*

*And mirthless grins greet green Decay,*

*Grim in the grass...*

But those who lie there, ashen-gray,  
Have sealed a pact with God; and they  
Will never wholly pass away—

They cannot pass...

## TO POSTERITY

O NAMELESS children of a future age—  
Whose grandsire, as I speak, is still unborn—  
Ye have no cause these fearful months to scorn!  
For you, these years are but a printed page.  
Ye cannot feel the stern, unbending rage  
Of nations struggling in a dread embrace!  
Ye read in books of what we *saw* take place...  
Think not too lightly of your heritage!

'Tis easier far to study, than to live  
Such history as we *have lived* for you!  
We gave the best of all we had to give—  
Do not forget us, though, with them we slew,  
Grinning beneath the sod, we lie—dumb dust—  
Our cannons rotted, and our swords a-rust...

Dead are our feuds, and stilled our hymns of hate;  
Our legacy to you has made us great!



## “I STILL LIVE”

HE who is not forgotten, is not dead!  
Nor he who lies obscure... His slightest acts  
Give rise to others, which in turn beget  
A line beyond control. His lightest words,  
Breathed thoughtlessly, spread forth before his eyes,  
Gigantic, like the Genius from the jar—  
Nor all his wit can crush them back again!  
Which one of us, and be he knight or knave,  
Can say, on dying, “I have left the world  
Exactly as I found it”? None, in truth!

### The Past

Lives still in us—has made us what we are...  
We change the Past, and pass the Present on,  
Living, when we are gone, in other lives  
That knew ours not; and no man can escape  
This Immortality which all must share,  
Though each be soon forgotten.

Think on this,  
And understand; once born, *thou canst not die!*

## "NON OMNIS MORIAR"

LONG centuries ago, the Greeks condemned  
A wisdom-lover, great beyond his Age...  
He gathered to his side his intimates,  
Disciples of a hundred quiet talks  
By road and river, and in banquet-hall;  
He shamed their sorrow with his cheerfulness,  
He bade them feast, the while he chided them,  
Drying their tears.

And when the gaoler came,  
Bringing the fatal goblet with its draught,  
He drank the hemlock, calmly laid him down,  
Drawing his cloak about his stiff'ning limbs—  
And, as he died, Awe hushed the voice of Grief...

The old year silences the moaning wind  
Wrapping his withered form in spotless snow;  
The leafless trees stand gaunt and sternly sad,  
Their naked arms aloft and motionless;  
The storm is over: dark and sullen clouds  
Race angrily across the broken sky;  
The foam-flecked surf but ripples to the shore;  
The glassy sea reflects the midnight stars  
In her black depths; the breeze chokes back a sob—

The old year folds his blanket closer, now,  
And with the cheer of Christmas in his heart,  
Sighs out his soul upon the winter air.

Men live in Time, and make the fame of years!  
This War now raging, Wilhelm, hath made thine,  
As thou hast given the three dread twelvemonths past  
(And more to come!) a bloody name indeed,  
Which will not die at once.

Ah, happy world,  
Could it forget that thou hast lived! forget  
The wreck of Serbia, Belgium's sufferings,  
The sacrifice of France, Great Britain's loss,  
Ay, and the weight of woe beneath which bends  
Thine own misguided folk, deaf to the voice  
Of Truth and Honor, trusting in thy Gott,  
Whom thou hast fashioned for thy private ends!  
So shalt thou live, the victim of thine acts,  
Bound with the memory of these fatal years...  
Cry for oblivion, Autocrat! that, at least,  
Thou canst not have.

Yet, when the storm is past,  
The clearer light to which we shall emerge—  
Foretold by flashes of self-sacrifice  
And brave endurance in these darkest hours—  
May show thee forth as worker of God's will,  
Whose vain attempts to add to thy domain  
Gave birth to a new era for mankind.

And the obscure, who suffer and who die  
Unnoticed, what of them? Some crime redeemed  
By heroism; worry and dull routine  
Smothered beneath a self-forgetful calm  
At home, by maids and widows; duty done  
In face of hell; devotion unrecorded,  
And uncomplaining sorrow hid in service,  
Crown with undying lustre these great days!  
The birth-years of an epoch glow with hope  
And promise of new life... As mothers bear  
A present pain by looking far ahead  
At noble deeds the babe is born to do,  
So we find strength in what the vast obscure  
Have given to these months.

And good can grow  
From evil, as a flower springs from dung;  
The dawn from night, nobility from war—  
*Art thou, O Wilhelm, savior of the race?*

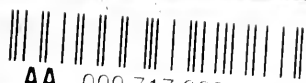
Men live in Time, and make the fame of years!  
Thou wilt not wholly die, whose name is stamped  
Across this century; who hast evoked  
Such strength from Demos—and such sacrifice!



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